



News Release

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This holiday season, give your family the gift of healthy food

Many mothers and children qualify for WIC nutrition help

OLYMPIA — With Thanksgiving just days away, families with young children struggling with job loss and pay cuts are finding it tougher to keep healthy food on the table. There's help at more than 220 neighborhood clinics statewide through WIC – The Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.

With just a phone call, parents get an appointment in one to two weeks, and will receive WIC checks for each qualifying family member at their first appointment. Who qualifies and what do they get? Depending on their income, women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or just had a baby, and children under age five receive monthly WIC checks for \$50 worth of healthy food. A pregnant woman with a three-year-old, for example, would get about \$100 in checks for WIC foods. They can use them in their own community grocery stores. They also get support and information about how to stay healthy.

[Household income guidelines](#) range from \$2,268 for a family of two to \$5,213 for a family of seven. Call 1-800-322-2588 for details. To find a [WIC clinic](#) and other helpful food and health resources families can go to parenthelp123.org. WIC is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“Every day we hear about cuts in health and social service programs,” said Cathy Franklin, WIC nutrition coordinator. “People may be surprised to know that WIC has openings, and nearly two-thirds of WIC clients are from working families including our military,”

[Nearly one in seven children in Washington](#) (16.8 percent) now lives in poverty, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Nearly one in four (22 percent) in the United States lives in poverty – the highest number in history. WIC helps parents give their children a healthy start with nutritious foods, health resources and nutrition advice, including breastfeeding support.

“It breaks my heart when I hear about families who call asking if they qualify because one parent has lost their job and they may have to lose their house,” Franklin continues. “Sometimes that extra support and advice WIC offers can make all the difference for a family. We know parents want what’s best for their children. And parents know kids need healthy food year round, not just during the holidays.”

WIC is a trusted nutrition advisor for everyone, even for non-WIC families. To make healthy choices in grocery stores, especially in the cereal and juice aisles, look for the WIC label on the shelf. All WIC foods are chosen for high quality nutrition and the juices and cereals are lower in sugar.

More about Washington WIC:

- Pregnant women in the program have fewer premature and low birth-weight babies.
- Babies and children on WIC are healthier and get more key nutrients like iron, protein, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin C.
- Three-quarters (72 percent) of the WIC budget goes to healthy foods for 312,000 mothers, babies, and children.
- Local communities receive over \$120 million dollars in food sales from WIC checks.
- Over 65 percent of infants born in rural counties are served by Washington WIC.
- Half of all infants statewide are served by WIC.
- Working families make up 65 percent of WIC participants, yet 66 percent live on incomes at the poverty level.
- More than 15,300 of WIC clients are women in the military, or women and children in a military family.

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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